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<p>(21) International Application Number: PCT/US97/09845 (22) International Filing Date: 10 June 1997 (10.06.97) (30) Priority Data: 08/660,944 10 June 1996 (10.06.96) US (71)(72) Applicants and Inventors: VAYDA, Mark [US/US]; 1500 Great Falls Street, McLean, VA 22101 (US). WEYL, Nancy [US/US]; 1330 Mercer Lane, McLean, VA 22101 (US). (74) Agents: TATE, Rodger, L. et al.; Baker &amp; Botts, L.L.P., The Warner, 1299 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20004 (US).</p>		<p>(81) Designated States: AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, CA, CH, CN, CU, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, GB, GE, GH, HU, IL, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, NO, NZ, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, TJ, TM, TR, TT, UA, UG, US, UZ, VN, YU, ARIPO patent (GH, KE, LS, MW, SD, SZ, UG), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).  <b>Published</b> <i>Without international search report and to be republished upon receipt of that report.</i></p>
<p>(54) Title: UNIVERSAL INPUT DEVICE AND SYSTEM (57) Abstract  A computer system comprising a plurality of input devices and a processor. Each input device comprises a base portion, a control portion, a plurality of input keys disposed on the control portion for permitting a user to request a data input to the processor, a universal connector for connecting the control portion to the base portion and permitting the user to move the control portion universally with respect to the base portion through a plurality of first and second discrete positions in first and second directions, and a signal generator for generating signals indicating the first and second discrete position of the control portion and user data input requests. A slider is provided which provides a four discrete positions in a plurality of directions. The processor receives and processes the data input requests and positional signals. A display displays an image generated by the processor. A character selector unit presents a character presentation graphic on the display. The character presentation graphic comprises a plurality of rows and a plurality of vertical clusters, each row and each vertical cluster comprising no more than five character selection icons, wherein each first discrete position corresponds to a row and each second discrete position corresponds to a vertical cluster and wherein the character selector unit selects and performs a function associated with the character selection icon corresponding to the first and second discrete positions of the control portion and the input key causing the user input data request. A rotational mechanism permits a user to rotate the control portion with respect to the base portion.</p>		

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